

AN ACCOUNT
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Rev. JOSEPH LAMB,
TO THE CO-PASTORAL CARE
OF THE
INDEPENDENT CHURCH
At WEYMOUTH, Dorset,
APRIL 20, 1797.

PUBLISHED BY PARTICULAR REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]
1797.

THE SERVICE OF THE DAY

Was conducted in the following ORDER:

The Rev. Mr. UNDERWOOD began with Prayer and reading the Scriptures.

The Rev. Mr. G. HARVEY, delivered the Introductory Discourse.

The Rev. Mr. GRAY received the Call of the Church, and proposed the usual Questions, when

The Rev. Mr. LAMB gave a Confession of Faith.

The Rev. Mr. DUNCAN offered the Ordination Prayer, attended with imposition of hands.

The Rev. Mr. SMALL gave the Charge.

The Rev. Mr. W. HERVEY offered the Intercessory Prayer.

The Rev. Mr. SALTREN having delivered the Ordination Sermon wholly *extempore*, did not consent to publish it. But on the application of the church at Weymouth, the Rev. Mr. ROGERS consented for his Discourse, delivered in the evening of the same day, to be printed.

The Rev. Mr. WILKINS (Pastor of the Church) concluded the whole with Prayer.





INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

IT has given me great concern that our dear Brother, (the Rev. Isaac Tozer of Taunton) to whom application was first made to engage in this part of the solemn work of this day, has been prevented from undertaking it. The work is entirely *new* to me; and, as circumstances stood, I could not receive as early a notice respecting it, as I could have wished. I must, therefore, dear Brother, earnestly beg *your* candor, and every proper allowance from my auditors at *large*, whilst I would address myself to the present service.

The particular design of the service, that now devolves upon me, is briefly to explain the more immediate occasion of our assembling here to-day. In conformity, therefore, with this design, permit me to say a few things relative to the *constitution and rights of the Gospel-Church, and the business of an Ordination*, as generally conducted among Protestant-Dissenters of the *Independent Denomination*.

1. With respect to the *nature* of a Gospel-Church, it is justly observed that (ἐκκλησία) the word, which we translate church, (if we regard only its etymology) signifies any kind of assembly, whether lawful or unlawful: and, in this sense, it is once used even in scripture, vid: Acts, 19, 32—39. But, when it respects the objects of the *new covenant*, it is to be understood in the following different senses in the New Testament; as, e. g. *It is sometimes to be understood of the whole mystical body of Christ, of all the objects of everlasting love, whether in heaven, on earth, or yet unborn: Heb. 12, 23. Col. 1. 20. And the term is sometimes used, in scripture, to express, in a collective view, all the distinct communities of grace throughout the world, as being one joint interest and kingdom of the great Redeemer; Acts, 20, 28. 1. Cor. 12, 28. 15, 9. 1. Tim. 3, 15. &c.*

But there is *another* acceptance of the term *church*, with which we are more particularly concerned at present, and which is, also, *very frequent* in the New Testament. It signifies e. g. "*a particular assembly of professed Christians, united in the faith, and by mutual voluntary consent, in order to their having communion with one another in all the holy ordinances of Christ's appointment; with a design hereby to glorify his great name, to propagate his gospel and interest in the world, and to promote their mutual edification in that most holy faith, which is founded on scripture revelation.*"

Every such religious embodied society of Christians we believe to be a distinct, visible, gospel-church. This, indeed, evidently appears from the New Testament; vid: 1. Cor. 1. 12. Such were the churches to whom the apostolical epistles were written; and there were sometimes *several* of these churches in the *same province*, Gal. 1. 2. A number of Christians assembled for divine worship in a *dwelling-house*, is in scripture called a church, Rom. 16. 5. And a church is spoken of as "*coming together into one place*," 1 Cor. 14, 23. From these circumstances, therefore, we assert that a gospel-church *does not* consist in *consecrated walls*: for a *material* building cannot be called a church but only in an *improper* and *relative sense*, as the *edifice* in which such a religious assembly *meet* for the divine purposes above specified; nor does it consist in any *political establishment*; but it is *composed of such persons as are* "*called to be saints, and walk together in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord.*" Acts, 2, 47; 9, 31.

II. We, also, assuredly believe, that as Christ is the *head* of the universal church, so *these separate churches* subsist only by his authority, Ephes. 1, 22, 23; 5, 23, 24: Matt. 23, 8, 9. He is the *appointed* head, he is the *only* head of the church that God hath made. All the *materials* of the church are of his making; yea, the *very being* of it takes its rise from him. And, as the head of government, he gives laws and ordinances to his church. As head of the church, he has commanded us to "*call no man, or set of men, fathers or masters on earth*," Matt. 23, 9. From this precept we understand it to be our duty, to *acknowledge no authority* of any *men* in matters of religion; but to "*remember that one only is our master and lawgiver, even Christ*;" and that all Christians are *brethren*," having no dominion over one another in this respect. "*Though the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they, who are great, exercise authority upon them, yet (our Lord saith) it shall not be so amongst you*," Matt. 20, 25, 26. From a conscientious regard then, to his command, we deny, disclaim, and renounce *all* authority in matters *purely religious*,

but that of our sovereign " Lord, and the great bishop of our souls," 1 Pet. 2, 25.

III. Since Christ then, is the head of government to his church, we may conclude that he has *appointed some particular form by which every separate gospel-church shall be governed*, and that he has specified its *proper officers* in his word. And this seems to be a very *reasonable* conclusion, if we only consider that Christ, as the head of *the* church, is not the *author of confusion*, but of *order and peace*, 1 Cor. 14, 33. and surely we cannot suppose that, *after he had given himself for his church*, he would leave its formation and the manner of its government to the " imaginations of men, which are evil, and only evil, and that continually," Gen. 6, 5 ; 8, 21. Accordingly we find that there is a particular form of church-government exhibited and represented in scripture, which we think to be strictly *congregational and independent*. Christ has, also, supplied *his church with proper officers*. After his ascension, he raised up some extraordinary officers for extraordinary work, viz: to plant and propagate christianity in the world ; such, e. g. as the twelve Apostles, the Evangelists, &c. But these men (it is obvious) were no part of Christ's provision in behalf of gospel-churches, in order to their being duly organized, and furnished for *stated edification* ; for, in the very nature of things, their office-power and work died with them.

With respect then, to the *stated officers*, whom Christ hath appointed for every church, we read of none in the New Testament, but what may be comprehended under two general characters, viz: that of *Bishops, Presbyters, or Elders*, to whom belong the administration of the word and sacraments, and presiding in church assemblies in matters both of worship and discipline, Ephes. 4, 1 : 1 Pet. 5, 1. and *that of Deacons*, who are to take care of the temporal concerns of the church, " to serve tables," i. e. the table of the Lord, of the minister, and of the poor.

These two characters or classes, we think, comprehend *all* the stated officers whom Christ hath appointed for his church. This, indeed, very clearly appears from *scripture*. For we have mention of no *other officers* in Paul's first epistle to Timothy, which was written on purpose to " instruct Timothy, that he might know how to behave in a church of Christ," 1. Tim. 3. 15. And we find, in fact, that there were *no other officers* in the church at *Philippi* than *Pastors* and *Deacons*, Philipians 1, 1. From whence we cannot but think ourselves perfectly justified in concluding, that no other officers in a *church of Christ*, are of *divine appointment*.

With regard to Bishops, Presbyters, or Elders, and in short, *all the various characters* under which christian ministers are

represented in the New Testament, we assert that they are synonymous, and belong to *one and the same office*. This, we think, appears in the clearest manner from scripture-evidence. Thus, e. g. the Apostle describing what ought to be the qualifications of *Presbyters or Elders*, gives this reason why the qualifications, which he specifies, were requisite, viz: because a *Bishop* ought to *possess* them. “ Ordain *Elders* in every city, if any be blameless, &c. for a *Bishop* must be blameless,” Tit. 1. 5—7. Now it is evident, that the Apostle must here mean the same person and office by *Elder* and *Bishop*; for otherwise, the force of his reasoning is entirely destroyed, and the consequence which he draws, is absurd. Many other passages might be produced from the New Testament, which, in our judgment, plainly prove the same thing; but this is not necessary on the present occasion. We shall only observe, therefore, *in general*, that Bishops and Elders are synonymous; because we invariably find in scripture, that their *function*, their *qualifications* and *characters*, their *duties*, *account*, and *reward* were all the *same*; vid: Acts, 20, 17; 18, 28: 1 Pet. 5, 1—3, &c. Nor can a single passage be produced from the New Testament, wherein there is any *mention* made, or even the most distant intimation given, of any *inequality* or *preference* in office amongst them. As to the term *Priest*, it is justly observed, that it is never applied, in the New Testament, to *ministers* as distinguished from *other christians*; for the priestly office is forever abolished since Christ offered up himself; the office has a relation to *sacrifice*, and the application of the term to *christian ministers*, as is well known, is to be accounted for from the popish doctrine of the *sacrifice* of the *mass*, and of a real sacrifice in the *Eucharist*, or Lord's-Supper.

With respect to the necessary qualifications of these Bishops, Presbyters, or Elders, I would observe *only in general*, that they ought to be *men formed for this office by the Holy Spirit*; for none can be truly such, but those, who are thus formed. *They must be real christians, partakers of divine grace*, regenerated and sanctified by the spirit of Christ: this we think to be essentially necessary, so, that no person ought to engage in the work of the sanctuary without it. But yet every truly serious or gracious person is not fit to be a minister of the gospel; for ministerial gifts, and some suitable qualifications to discharge the duties of such a sacred office, appear to us to be also, so far necessary, as that none can reasonably be supposed to have a divine call to it without them; vid: 2 Tim. 2, 2: 1 Tim. 3, 2: Acts. 20, 17—28. They must be *voluntarily inclined to give themselves up* to the Lord in this sacred employment, in preference to every one besides. And they should have a free

opening made to them by providence to the office itself, &c. And to the *pastoral character*, we presume, are necessary, the choice and invitation of a particular church, and the minister's acceptance thereof.

IV. *We assert that every distinct church has a full and absolute right to chuse its own officers.* This appears highly *reasonable*. For surely (as it is observed with great propriety) it would be strange indeed if those, to whom the laws of the land have wisely reserved a liberty of chusing for themselves who shall be their *Lawyer* or *Physician*, &c. should not, when in church-fellowship, have a power, by the laws of Christ, to chuse their own Pastor. It is evidently the language of reason, that the guides of *our souls* should be chosen by *ourselves*: for this is a matter of much greater importance to us than any thing *earthly* can be; and it is an affair in the success of which none can be so much concerned as *ourselves*, because it is of ourselves that God will expect a final account.

Accordingly we find that this was the practice of the church in the *apostolic times*. We never read of *patrons* in the divine word: there is not even the shadow of an instance therein to be found, in which ministers were imposed on the *people* without their *own consent*, much less *against their will and inclination*. The *holy Apostles* themselves, with all their extraordinary *authority*, never pretended to this power: for it appears that even in the case of *Deacons*, they referred the matter to *the church*. "Brethren (say they) *look ye out* among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this *business*; and the saying pleased the *whole multitude*, and they (i. e. the *multitude*) chose Stephen," &c. Acts. 6, 3, 5. Here then, it is worthy of observation, that though all the twelve Apostles were present, they did nothing by themselves in this business, even though they were under a most plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit, so as to be able to *make an infallible choice*. And surely, if they did not impose lower and less important officers on the church, it is not reasonable to imagine that they would impose *Pastors* on them, in whose gifts, graces, and work, the people were much *more interested*. Accordingly we find that they did *not* assume this authority. For the people actually used the *same liberty* in the choice of their *Elders* or *Pastors*, as appears from Acts. 14, 23, "and when they *had ordained them Elders* in every church, and had prayed with fasting," &c. "They *ordained Presbyters* in every church:" so it is rendered in our *present translation*. But it is well known that the genuine signification of the original word ($\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\nu\eta\tau\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$) is to *consti-*

tute them such by the general suffrage of the people, which it was common to signify by lifting up, or stretching forth, the hand.

And thus it was rendered in all our old English bibles, till a later correction took place; and the marginal notes were left out, which affirm that "the Apostles did not impose Pastors on the church, through any superiority which they assumed over the churches, but only placed them there in compliance with the voice of the congregation." And, indeed, the charge given to Christians in scripture—"to take heed what they hear,"—"to beware of false prophets,"—not to *believe every spirit, but to try the spirits,*" &c. plainly proves that they have a right of judgment and of choice in this matter, and that it is their duty to use this right *which God hath given them.*

And this account of the right of the people to chuse their own Pastor is still further supported *by positive and acknowledged fact.* For it is remarked, and can be clearly proved, that there is no instance, during the three first centuries after Christ, of any one being made a Bishop or Pastor, except by the *election of the whole church.* Yea, even in Rome itself, the people elected their own Bishop for several hundred years. If any one was created a *Bishop by imperial mandates,* the people were enjoined to renounce him. vid: Towgood.

From all these grounds then, we affirm, that Pastors and Teachers receive their call and commission from the body of the *people,* and not from the *Bishops of the Established Church* in this land, or from the Pastors or Presbyters of other churches; for a gospel-church is, in fact, totally independent on all such foreign authority, and possesses in itself a full right to chuse its own Pastor, &c.

V. When a Pastor is thus chosen by a particular church, and has confirmed their choice by his own consent, he is separated or publicly set apart to this office; which is generally called *Ordination.* Thus, e. g. this christian church and congregation have made choice of the Rev. JOSEPH LAMB to be their Minister and Co-Pastor with the Rev. JOSEPH WILKINS, and he has accepted their invitation; as will be publicly recognized in the course of the solemnities of this day. We, therefore, as neighbouring ministers, are come hither at their mutual request, to assist in the performance of those religious services, which are usual on such an occasion, and which seem to us most consistent with scripture-rule. It is readily admitted that the part, which, as ministers, we take on this solemn occasion, does not constitute our Brother a Pastor of this Church; so that their choice of him, confirmed by his own consent, would not have been valid without it. But yet we think that it is not

only *agreeable* to the scripture-rule, but highly *expedient* also, that as his ministerial acts are to be public, so his entrance on his office should likewise be public; and, in order thereto, that other Pastors or Elders should join in the solemn work of this day. We are here then, on the present occasion, to avow our hearty *concurrence* or *harmony* with this Church in their *present* choice; and we act as in their names, without any *pretence* of conveying any *ministerial* or office-power, as from ourselves; for this, we believe, is derived solely from Christ and the choice of the people. On such occasions it is usual to offer up earnest prayer both for Pastor and People, to give an exhortation to the Pastor, and to deliver a sermon to the people and hearers in general.

This method of *Ordination*, or public investiture with the pastoral office, we think valid and scriptural; and consequently we deny the necessity of *episcopal ordination*, according to the usage of the Church of England. This indeed *we consider as contrary to scripture and primitive antiquity*; for no Bishops, or even Apostles themselves assumed an exclusive right to give ordination. And to assert the *necessity* of episcopal ordination, appears to us highly *uncharitable*, because it denies the validity of the ministry in all other Protestant Churches at home and abroad.

Our brethren in the Established Church, strenuously plead also, in favor of *an uninterrupted lineal succession of the episcopal order from the days of the Apostles*. But this is no where mentioned in scripture as *necessary* to render *ordination valid*. It appears to us that the Established Church cannot prove that she is possessed of it; and if she could, she must have received it through the corrupt channel of the *Church of Rome*. But the fact is, that this succession pleaded for, has often been interrupted by schisms and oppositions in the community; for there have sometimes been two and sometimes even *three Popes* at once. And besides, this would put it in the power of *this* order of men to deprive the church of God of the ministry of the word, which he has graciously instituted for its standing edification. On these grounds then, as Protestant-Dissenters, we think ourselves fully justified both by scripture and reason, in the liberty which we have taken to form ourselves into separate churches, independent on the authority of the ministers of the Established Church, and of those of any other church whatsoever.

Thus you have (what we think) a scriptural representation of a christian or gospel-church.—Christ is its only head; it is constituted by his appointment, and, therefore, his laws should be its only rules;—we have seen what are the rights and just

claims of such separate religious bodies ;—what are New Testament-Bishops or Pastors ; and in what manner persons should be introduced into pastoral relations. Let me be indulged with your patience a little longer, whilst I offer a few remarks of a more practical nature, and which seem not to be unsuitable to the business of this day. And

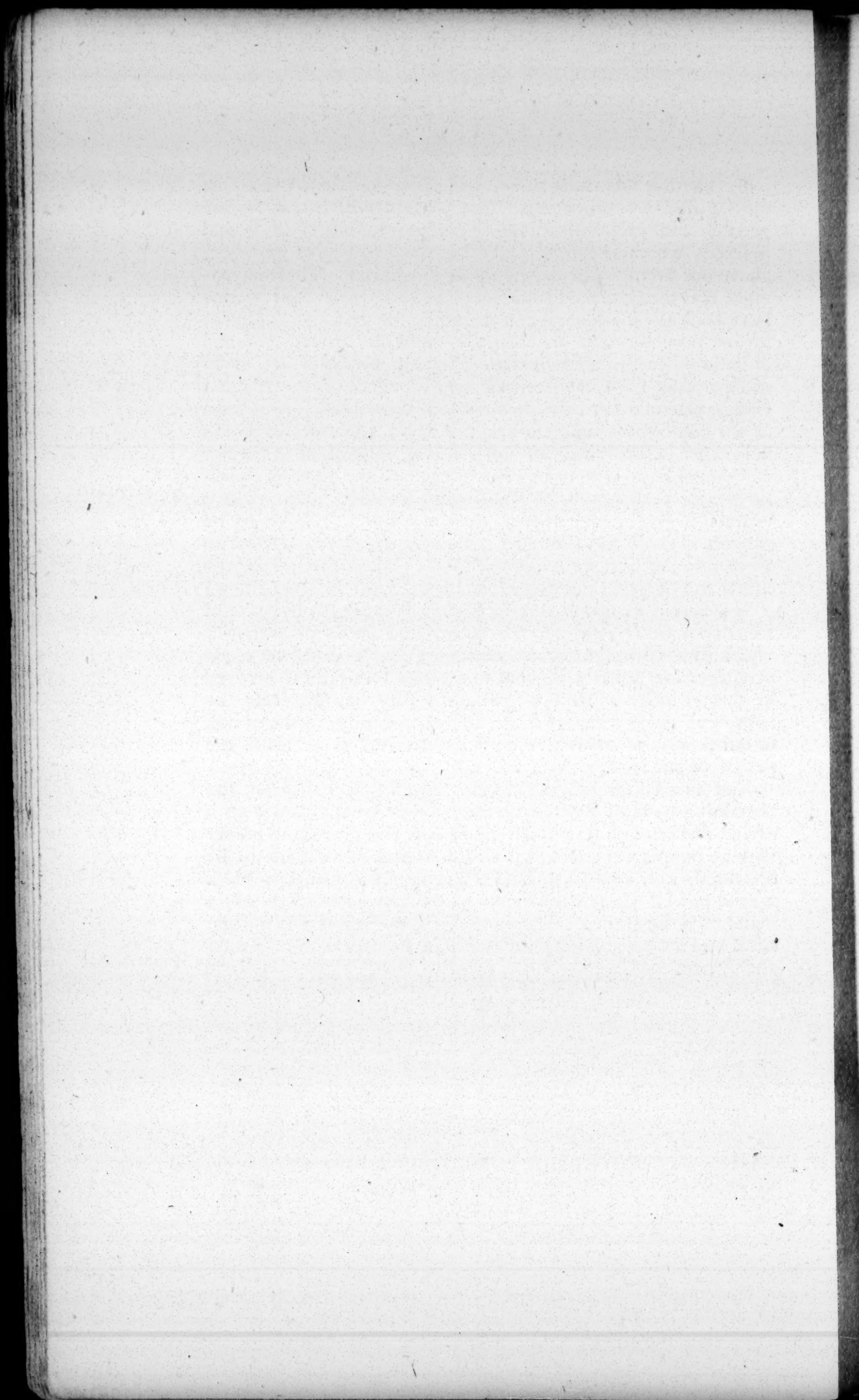
1. The solemnities of an ordination to the gospel ministry, should surely remind us of that great salvation, which it is the grand design of the ever-blessed God, by that ministry, to publish and proclaim. O that, on the present occasion, we could feel our hearts suitably affected with the consideration of God's *sovereignty* in suffering the *fallen angels* to perish, whilst his " thoughts towards *such guilty worms as we are*, were thoughts of peace and not of evil." Jer. 29, 11 : 2 Pet. 2, 4. How astonishing the *grace* of the Father, that he should give his own dear Son to suffer and to die in our room and stead, that we might not suffer that dreadful punishment which our sins so richly deserved ! How amazing the condescension and grace of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, who so cheerfully undertook the work of mediation for us ! And let us adore the love of the *eternal Spirit* in coming down to dwell in our guilty and polluted hearts, and effectually apply the dear Redeemer's purchase to our souls. The Lord grant that each of us may feel the *full force* of this *consideration*, and that the most ardent praises for this condescension and love of God, Father, Son and Spirit, may this day ascend from every heart, with divine acceptance, before the heavenly throne ! And may the church and congregation, that usually worship God in this place, feel their souls particularly warmed and animated by this love ! But

2. We may hence, also, see the care which the blessed Redeemer manifests towards his gospel-church, by the appointment of a gospel-ministry in it. Nothing can be more plain than that Christ has appointed a standing gospel-ministry in his church ; as might be clearly proved from scripture. Surely then, it is a great mercy that the blessed Jesus should raise up men like yourselves, whose special work it shall be to endeavour to instruct you in the things of God. How great is the mercy that he should so smile upon and bless their labors, as everlastingly to save so many miserable and perishing creatures by them. And every such day as this gives fresh occasion to think upon it with gratitude, and to bless God for such an appointment. Let it be your chief concern that the great ends of the christian ministry may be fully answered to your souls ; that by it you may be brought to the saving knowledge of the Redeemer ; and thus be gradually preparing for the church triumphant above. The Lord grant that every individual present, may be brought to see the great importance of this ! But

3. There is one thing more, which does not seem unsuitable on the present occasion, viz: that we should bless God for the peculiar and special advantages for improvements in grace and holiness, which as Protestant-Dissenters we conceive we enjoy, above our brethren in the Established Church. These advantages it is unnecessary to enumerate in this place: those, which have been already specified in the present service, are sufficient for our purpose. Let us then, be thankful to God for, and diligent to the utmost to improve, the liberty which we enjoy of separating from the *national* church, and of worshipping God in places of our own, in a manner agreeable to the dictates of our consciences, and (as we think) to the rules of God's holy word. Surely we are under strong obligations to greater and exemplary holiness in consequence of our superior privileges; for nothing can be more equitable than "that, where much is given, much should also be required." O let us be concerned then, so to conduct ourselves, that it may appear to all around us, that we really wish and endeavour to imbibe the spirit, and copy the example of our blessed Lord, in every thing!

Nor should we forget, on the present occasion, to be grateful also to our *civil governors*, the *King*, and those in authority under him, through whose clemency under God we enjoy privileges far superior to what our pious fore-fathers enjoyed in former reigns. And we should testify our gratitude by approving ourselves good subjects, endeavouring, to the utmost of our power, to promote the prosperity, and to preserve the peace, of our land.

And now I have only to add my earnest prayer that all the remaining parts of this solemn service may be attended with a divine unction: that a spirit of earnest and prevailing prayer may be poured out; and that all the sacred instructions to be delivered, may prove seasonable, and be accompanied with a special power. May the solemn transactions of this day, lay a foundation for mutual happiness both to Pastors and people here, and for eternal songs of praise in a better world! Amen and Amen.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BEFORE THE

CONFESSION.

DEAR BROTHER,

AGREEABLY to what has been said, we do not pretend to have the least superiority over *you*, any authority over *this Church*, or *power of settling* a Minister among them: But, in conformity to a laudable practice, at your request and that of this Church, we engage in the solemn work of this day. Now, to proceed in an orderly manner, the following questions will be proposed to this Church, and to the Rev. JOSEPH LAMB.

Will this Church be pleased to recognize their Call given to the Rev. JOSEPH LAMB, to the Pastoral Office among them in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. Wilkins?

[Here the Call was repeated by Mr. Miller, in the name of the Church] After which, Mr. Gray proceeded,

I doubt not, my Brother, but you have just sentiments of the Work of the Christian Ministry, and through providence and grace, that you possess qualifications for it; yet be pleased on this occasion to express,

Quest. 1. What are your views of the Office of a Christian Bishop or Pastor?

Ans. From a conviction early in life of its being the most important of all employments; I long felt my heart strongly inclined to devote myself wholly to the delightful work, before actually entering on it. Far from considering it merely as a

genteel employment, or as an *idle life*, I believe its very essence to consist in this,—That it is a sacred Office instituted by the Lord Jesus, on the most urgent concerns between the Eternal Holy God, and short-lived, sinful man:—A Work which respects not the bodies of men, but purely instituted for the benefit of their souls:—A Work peculiarly arduous and laborious. On a serious consideration of it, I have frequently felt myself necessitated to cry out, * “Who is sufficient for these things?” But whilst it is my desire, with deep humility, that it may be discharged with anxious seriousness and pious zeal, may I find † “all my sufficiency to be of God!” and may I continually find that his § “grace is sufficient for me!”

Quest. 2. What are the leading *motives* which induced you to desire the ministerial work?

Ans. I Hope I can appeal to the searcher of hearts, that these are my *leading*, my *only* motives.—From a heart-felt conviction of my sinfulness by nature and practice, I well recollect the season when I found ineffable delight on the *first* views obtained by faith, of an atoning Saviour to deliver me. Considering all my fellow-mortals, my brethren of mankind, as in the same awful circumstances, whilst unconvinced sinners, I have a strong desire to proclaim to them *that* grace from whence spring all my own eternal hopes. Temporal honors I expect not: For worldly gains, am not conscious that I have any anxious solicitude. But I trust that to see God glorified in the salvation of immortal souls, would afford me a pleasing, a most exalted satisfaction; infinitely superior to any springing from temporal considerations. The free grace, the unmerited mercy of God, is the only source of my hopes; and,—as displayed through Christ’s merits—the origin of my strength.

Quest. 3. What are your reasons for exercising your Ministry among the *Protestant Dissenters*, rather than in the established Church?

Ans. My reasons spring simply from *one* principle, grounded upon the words of our Lord—“My kingdom is not of this world.” Whence I infer, that the Gospel-kingdom—of which Jesus Christ is *alone* the head—is purely *spiritual* in itself, and in all its parts; therefore that human power and earthly wisdom, only display weakness and folly in supposing they promote its interests by their feeble aid. I have neither aversion nor disrespect to the established church, and I love, as fellow-christians, all its conscientious members. But, as a Christian, I think

* 2 Corin. ii. 16. † 2 Corin. iii. 5. § Ibid, chap. xii. 9.

myself bound—from my allegiance to Christ—to use the liberty of a Christian; therefore, I “call no man Master upon earth, for *One* is my Master, even *Christ*.”

Whilst the twentieth article says, “that the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith;” such a position appears to me completely set aside by the current testimony of the Gospel. Besides, I apprehend that in claiming such authority, it seems to symbolize too much with popery, in asserting a power over the *conscience*, which I cannot perceive that Christ has any where granted to any mortals. I am firmly persuaded, from considering the *real spirit* of the Gospel, its *doctrines*, and its *genuine tendency* that Jesus Christ alone is the Lord of his own Church: that none have any authority whatever to alter or add to his institutions: that the scriptures are completely sufficient for edification and salvation, and contain the *only* rule of christian worship: and, that as none can be judged in my stead hereafter, so none have any right to choose my faith for me here. Convinced that every distinct church, or separate christian society, has an indubitable scriptural liberty to choose its own pastor, I accede to the unanimous invitation of this christian society to labor in that capacity among them, in connection with the Rev. Mr. WILKINS, their present Pastor. And may it be for the promotion of real piety, gospel charity, and our general comfort.

Quest. 4. Your Fathers and Brethren present will be obliged by hearing you express your purposes as to *faithfulness*, *diligence*, and *perseverance*?

Ans. A humble diffidence of himself always becomes a christian, especially a Minister: I therefore dare promise nothing in my own strength. But by the help of divine grace I wish to be *faithful* to Christ, in fidelity to the souls committed to my care, and to “watch for them as one who am “to give account.” As far as a weak constitution will permit, I hope *diligently* to give myself to the sacred employment, for the good of this church and society, over which “the Holy Ghost has made me the overseer;” and actively to exert myself, that Christ may be honored in my promoting the spiritual improvement of his mystical body. Respecting *perse-*

* See particularly on this subject, Peirce's vindication of the Dissenters. Part ii. Chap. 1, &c. Towgood's letters to White. 8vo. With the very excellent Introduction to the 1st vol. of Palmer's Non-conformist's Memorial; and § iv. and v. pa. 31—54.

verance in this blessed work, I can only say, that my desires are towards it, my heart is in it, my comforts are from it: and as my gracious God may deign to perfect his strength in my weakness, I have a sincere wish to "spend and be spent" therein; to "labor in word and doctrine" as long as my life may be spared, without fainting in my great master's service, nor ever, on any account, forsaking it. And here I affectionately request the serious prayers of all christians present; especially that my honored fathers and dear brethren in the ministry will ever assist me by their paternal advice and brotherly council, as they may at any time judge necessary; for my own personal happiness, my ministerial usefulness, or the advancement of genuine religion in this part of our Lord's vineyard.

A

CONFESSION OF FAITH,

DELIVERED AT
WEYMOUTH, DORSET,

APRIL 20, 1797.

By JOSEPH LAMB.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God
to Salvation to every one that believeth.

St. PAUL. Romans, Chap. i. v. 16.

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CONFESSION OF FAITH, &c.

THE Stupendous fabric of Nature proves itself the product of glorious power, united with infinite wisdom ; so that whether the Universe be considered collectively, or in all its parts, I behold such traces of mingled ability and skill, as at once lead me to adopt the apostolic conclusion,*—" as every " house was builded by some man, so He that built all things " is God."

I believe that God is a *Spirit*, and that his existence and attributes demand my devout attention : that God existed from eternity ; that he must be *self-existent* and *necessarily-existent*, and that the evidences of his *natural* perfections and attributes are deducible from a serious attention to his works of Creation and Providence :—that God is *immutable*, or, unchangeably the same—that he is *infinite*—that we have also the clearest proofs of the *Unity* of Deity, or, that to us there is but *one* God :—that this self-existent Being is an *immaterial* Spirit—actually *omnipresent*, *almighty*—*omniscient*, and perfectly possessed in the highest degree—of all these *natural* attributes of Deity.

The *moral* perfections of God furnish me with fresh cause for encreasing admiration ! Here I am called to consider *Wisdom* which cannot be defeated ; *Holiness* without a blot ; *Justice* ever properly displayed ; *Truth* without possibility of violation ; together with *Benevolence*—*Goodness*—*Mercy* or *Love* exerted, in union with Righteousness, for the benefit of all who trust in God. On the whole, I feel myself so lost in this depth of

* Heb. ch. iii. v. 4.

wonders, as to be constrained to ask, " Canst thou by searching
" find out God ? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfec-
" tion."*

I believe that this glorious JEHOVAH first created the Universe by a word : that he spread abroad the firmament, in which he placed the heavenly luminaries which shine to his praise : that he kindled the *Sun*, lighted up the *Moon*, and placed the *Stars* as lamps to adorn his celestial palace. That he formed this globe, the Earth on which we dwell, and made it an habitation fit for Man's residence :—that in the time which seemed best to Deity, Man was formed from the dust of the Earth, in the Image, and partaker of the Likeness of his glorious CREATOR ; that he was possessed of knowledge, righteousness and holiness, yet with the *possibility of falling* : that he was placed on this earth the Ruler of the inferior creation ; But, that this Sun-shine of divine prosperity was clouded by the temptations of Satan, the grand Deceiver, who—under the form of a serpent—seduced our first parents from their wonted allegiance ; and, by enticing them to sin, opened the fatal door to pain, infelicity and every degree of misery : that, by this act of disobedience, our original Progenitor lost that image of God which had been his greatest glory ; that he was a fallen creature, a partaker of *spiritual*, and liable to *temporal* and *eternal death*. Yet, that the all-wise Creator is without fault, in permitting him to sin, as Man was created a moral, free, or voluntary Agent.

I believe that, *in consequence* of this sin of Adam—who was our federal Head, and the Representative of the whole human race—all his posterity are considered as sinners, that they are under the curse of God's violated Law,† and liable to condemnation ; bringing into the world with them a lamentable propensity to evil, but possessed of an aversion from every thing really and spiritually good—or which any way tends to God's glory, or their own real happiness.

I believe, that when Man was in this desperate state, he could not *know* God or properly *obey* him ; therefore, that it was exceedingly *probable* that the Deity would favor him with a *manifestation of his will*, man's reason and conscience being totally *insufficient* to instruct him in a knowledge of the Almighty or his obligations to him : I believe, that God was pleased to make such a discovery of his mind, in the revelation

* Job. xi. 7.

† Galatians iii Chapter, 10th and 13th verses.

of truth : That this revelation is supported by the strongest evidences of its *divine original*, superior to what any other system of doctrines or morals ever possessed : That this revelation contains truths of such a nature, as carry a conviction of their *Divinity* to every truly humbled mind : That it is comprized in the writings of Moses and the Prophets,—in the words of Christ when upon earth—and in the sacred compositions of the Evangelists and Apostles ; or, in those Books commonly stiled the Old and New Testament ; and, that these inspired Books contain every thing necessary for sinful man to know, in order to his honoring God in this world, and being happy with him in the next : Or, all those essentially necessary articles of Doctrine, Experience and Practice for the salvation of sinners who believe it, and whose hearts have submitted to its unerring instructions. I further believe, that in this sacred Volume JEHOVAH has revealed himself—the *One* only living and true God—as subsisting in a mode *peculiar to himself* ; or, that Three distinct Persons are declared to exist in the Unity of Deity : Indeed, that respecting the *manner* of existence, as Scripture is silent, Reason can decide nothing : I believe, that this is wholly a *truth of Revelation*, which ought to be received upon the testimony of JEHOVAH himself ; and, as such, that it is neither absurd nor incredible, though attended with difficulties which transcend human comprehension perfectly to unravel. I believe that this is the *only scriptural* view of the *Infinite LORD* ; that therefore in honoring the *SON* and the *SPIRIT* *equally* as the *FATHER*, I am free from the charge of *Idolatry*,—only worshipping God Almighty agreeably to the view in which I *most sincerely* believe—and which I thus publicly declare I *do* most sincerely believe—that He has revealed Himself to us in the scriptures.

I believe, that according to the “ determinate counsel of “ *GOD*,” from his mere Love, a Saviour was early *promised* to fallen Man, that his coming was repeatedly *predicted*, that he had been *long expected*, and that “ in the fulness of time” he *appeared* as the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been with the Father “ from of old even from everlasting,” the equal partaker of the homage of the angelic hosts, and equally with the Father and Spirit, enjoying celestial dignity and felicity : that according to Old Testament types and prophecies, he was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary,—“ grew up a man of “ sorrows,”—and, having borne the weight of guilt, the guilt of all his chosen people, in the garden,—having undergone the greatest indignities and cruelties, He at length without a murmur, submitted to be nailed to the cross for the salvation

of his people ; that on it he “ yielded up his spirit,”† and thus made a compleat vicarious atonement for sin :—that this accursed death was endured entirely for the salvation of those who had been given to Him by the Father from eternity in the covenant of redemption, and that *their* salvation was effected “ according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of “ the glory of his grace :”(a)—that all for whom Jesus died were “ chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that “ they might be holy, and without blame before him in “ love.”(b)—Yet, that by nature, these are all born in sin,(c) “ the children of wrath even as others ;” until effectually attracted by the omnipotent agency of the Holy Spirit, when they become a “ willing people,” even “ in the day of God’s “ power :”(d) that then they are considered as freely justified by faith, through the perfect righteousness(e) of the Redeemer ; are savingly convinced of sin, induced from sensible conviction of their misery,(f) to cry out for a Saviour, that they, through grace, actually believe the gospel testimony concerning Jesus, to whom they (g)flee as the only refuge provided for guilty and lost sinners.

I believe that Christ is the (h)head of vital influence to all believers, his spiritual members, who receive from him strength and grace for performing duties, the enduring trials, and resisting temptations :(i)—that all his people are (k)“ kept “ by the mighty power of God through faith to salvation,” and have from him grace to “ endure to the end, that they may be “ saved.”(l) Still I am persuaded that whilst this is their blessed privilege, it is their indispensable duty to attend to the commands and exhortations of the Scriptures ; fervently to labor that they abound in all evangelical obedience ; that they are bound by the strongest of all engagements—the constraining Love of Christ—assiduously to cultivate every christian duty, and to *prove* themselves partakers of a lively faith by a holy walk and spiritual conversation. And that their obligations, in this respect, have reference to every species of duty, public or private, personal or relative ; that every christian is bound so to let his “ light shine before men, that they seeing

† See the original Greek of John xix. Chapter : 13th verse.

(a) Ephesians i. 5 and 9. (b) Ibid : verse 4. (c) Psalm li. verse 5. and Ephes. ii. 3. (d) Psalm cx. verse 3. (e) Romans iii. 25. and 26. (f) Matt. viii. 25. latter part, and Luke xviii. 13. (g) Hebrews vi. 18. and Matthew xviii. 11. (h) Coloss. ii. 19. and Ephes. v. 30. (i.) 2 Corin. xii. 9, 10. (k) 1 Peter i. 10. and Jude, verse i. (l) Matt. x. 23.

" his good works, may glorify his Father who is in Heaven." (a)

I believe that all *ceremonial* holiness of *places* is at an end, (b) but that in *every* place where the professed followers of Jesus meet together for prayer, praise, reading the scriptures, hearing his word, and every office of a *religious* nature, that such a *society* may be properly denominated a *Church of Christ*. (c) But, that this term, *Church*, (d) is more peculiarly applied to those who openly profess subjection to Christ in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. (e)—I believe, that Christ has enjoined two plain positive Ordinances, which are to be observed by his people to the end of time. The one is *Baptism*, which I think ought to be administered by sprinkling to the children of believing parents, (f)—to adults, upon their first conversion to God—if never baptized in their infancy—and upon those children in general born in christian countries upon the professed faith of their parents; (g) as I conceive this ordinance to be an outward sign of admission within the external covenant in order that they may be afterwards (h) educated in the principles of real christianity; and thus be brought up *for* God, as they have been devoted *to* him.

The other Ordinance is the *Eucharist* or *Lord's-Supper*, which I believe is peculiar to those who give evidence of a knowledge of real religion; supported by a consistent practice, or holy conversation :—That it is to be regarded as an emblem of the " precious blood of Christ shed" for sin, and of his holy body " broken" or wounded for transgressors; (i) and that thus the servants of Christ are called to shew " their Lord's death till he " come." (k)

I believe, that in consequence of the original sentence (l) pronounced by Deity upon the first man for his transgression, the bodies of all mankind are to be brought down to the grave: that, immediately upon the dissolution of the mortal part, the released spirits of the saints are " present with the Lord (m)—" that they are in paradise," in the enjoyment of bliss; but

(a) Matthew v. 15, 16. (b) John iv. 21: et seq. (c) See particularly Acts xi. 26: and xv. 22 &c. (d) Matthew xviii. 17.

(e) Perhaps this *distinction* may be neither *real* nor *important*, but may proceed from the usual mode of expression *amongst congregational Societies*.

(f) Matt. xxviii. 19. (g) Acts ii. 39: former part; also Acts xvi. 15, and 33 verses. (h) Matthew xxviii. 20: former part. (i) Matt. xxvi. 26 and 28. Luke xxii. 19 et. seq: (k) 1 Corinthians xi. 26.

(l) Genesis iii. 19. 2 Samuel xiv. 14. and Hebrews ix. 27. former part. (m) Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Corin. 5, 8.

that the spirits of sinners are immediately separated from all their present, imaginary enjoyments, yet without any hope in *God*.(n)

I believe, that the dark recesses of the tomb retain the mortal bodies till the closing scene of terrestrial things; that then they shall be raised(p) from their dusty beds by "the power of Christ,"(q) when "the voice of the Archangel and "the trump of God" shall sound, summoning the dead to "arise and come to judgment:"—that *then* the souls of the pious and the impious shall be re-united to their respective bodies, and appear at the tribunal of Jesus, "the judge of "all"(r) men; that "in righteousness" he will judge mankind, and that his lips will pass the equitable sentence which shall determine the final state of all:—that "the wicked shall go "away into everlasting punishment," to endure the merited displeasure of Deity; "but the righteous into life eternal," to be for ever happy with their Lord. That in his presence they will appear as redeemed from sin, from death and hell, *alone* by the merits of the glorious Immanuel, whose honored name and infinite grace shall be sounded and adored by the saved myriads of the blessed through the countless ages of eternity! Amen.

These are, briefly, the heads of Gospel-doctrine, or the leading views of scriptural principles, which this christian Society can testify have—for nearly these six years past—formed the basis of my public ministrations.—That their influence may be more abundantly felt upon my heart,—more piously, affectionately and faithfully* proclaimed by my lips, and evidenced by my conduct, I earnestly entreat your prayers, with those of all my dear Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry present; that I may "make manifest the favor of the Gospel" for the glory of our gracious Redeemer, and the general spread of Religion in this place by the conversion of many sinners to God, and their growing preparation for glory. Amen.

(n) See Proverbs xiv. 32. et al: (p) Daniel xii. 2. John v. 29.

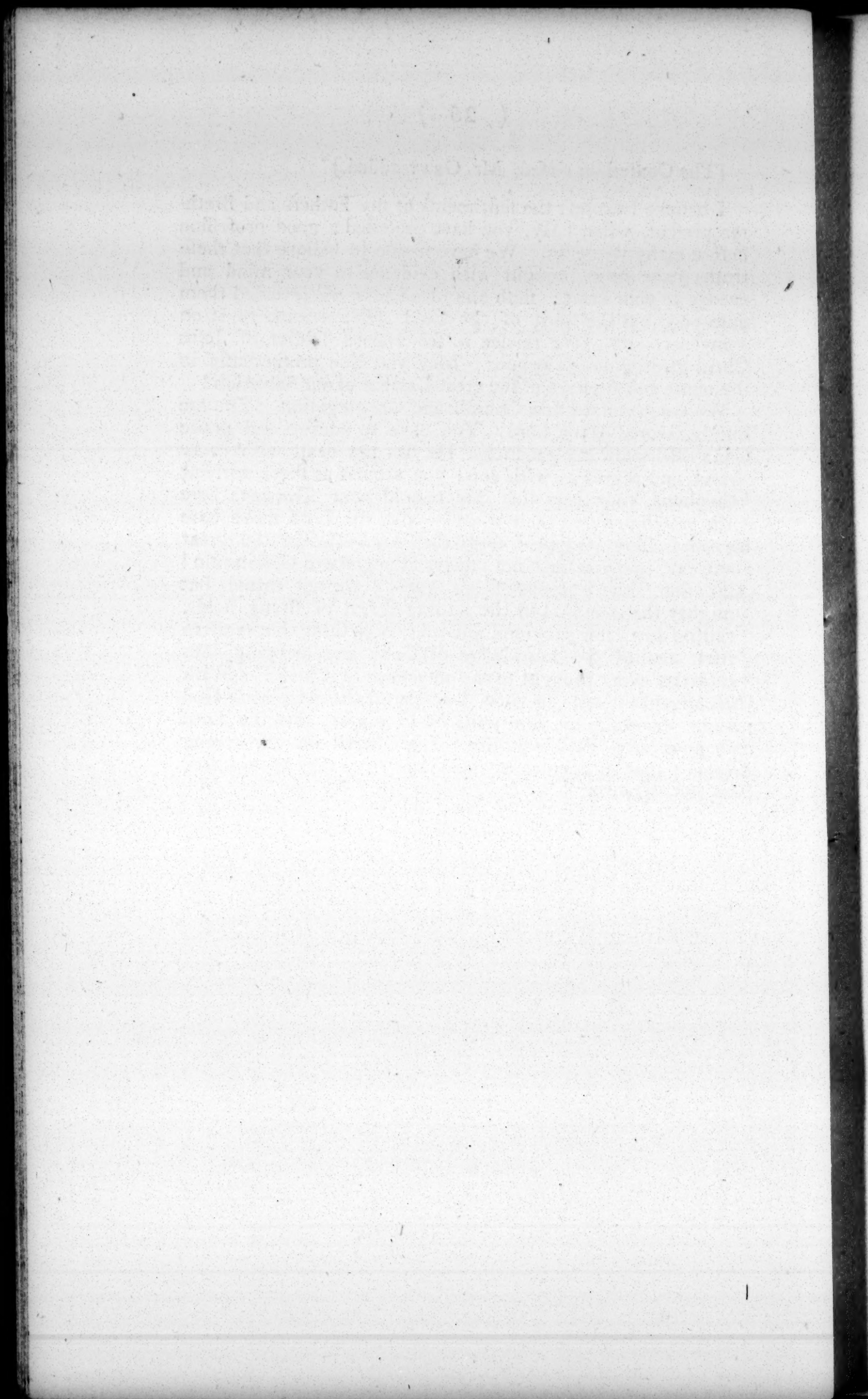
(q) Revel. xii. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 52. 1 Thes. iv. 16. Revel. xx. 12.

(r) Heb. xii. part 23 verse. and Acts xvii. 30th verse.

[The Confession closed, Mr. GRAY added,]

I believe I express the sentiments of my Fathers and Brethren present, when I say, you have professed a good profession before many witnesses. We have reason to believe that these truths have been brought with evidence to your mind and energy to your heart: flesh and blood have not revealed them unto you, but the spirit of the Lord. We rejoice in it on many accounts. We rejoice to see a good soldier of Jesus Christ girding on his armour. May you ride prosperously in the name and strength of the great Captain of our Salvation!

We congratulate this Church and Congregation. You are highly favored of the Lord: You have to admire and praise God's distinguishing goodness: He has not dealt with every church and people as with you; you are not as sheep without a shepherd, your eyes this day behold your *Teachers*; here "the watchmen join their voice."—May the Lord make bare his arm! May it appear from this day,—and in the great audit-day, that you have not received the grace of God in vain! Also, that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!" With these important ends in view, I invite all the people of God present, devoutly to join with us in prayer, that the Lord may pour out a double portion of his Spirit on our young Brother; that by his means, the Lord's word may be glorified here and elsewhere!



THE
EXHORTATION

TO THE
Rev. JOSEPH LAMB.

BY THE
Rev. JAMES SMALL.



THE

EXHORTATION.

My dear Friend and Brother,

YOUR Mind, I doubt not, has been greatly impressed with the thoughts of the solemnities of this day : You have often and earnestly been looking up to God for suitable grace, and his special blessing. The sense you discover of the importance of the work in which you are engaged ; and your serious purposes as to future duties ; cannot fail of giving satisfaction and pleasure to the minds of your Brethren and Friends who are present.

The undertaking is of great and weighty concern ; but no office can be more honourable, than to be employed by Jesus Christ, to preach his gospel, to administer his ordinances, instrumentally to bring souls into his fold ; and to train up his chosen for glory. I wish, as I suppose many others will, that you had fixed upon a more fit person, for performing this part of the present solemn work ; but as I must now proceed, you will believe that what may be delivered arises from brotherly esteem, and is only spoken with a view of stirring up your mind by way of remembrance. We might possibly gather some pertinent and useful reflections for this occasion, from that noble determination of the Apostles,

A&S

Acts. vi. 4.

We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

The Converts among the Hellenist Jews, it appears, were highly displeased because their widows were neglected; the disciples met on the occasion, and in the 3d verse, you have the advice of the Twelve Apostles; which is thus paraphrased by Doddridge, "Therefore Brethren, as you easily see how inconvenient it would be to suffer this care to lie upon us, and how inevitably it would render us incapable of attending to the important duties of our office, it is our united request to you, that you look out from among yourselves seven men, of an attested character, full of the Holy Spirit, and of approved wisdom, whom we may by common consent and approbation, set over this affair; and who may make it their particular business, to attend to the management of it. And we, in the mean time, being freed from this great incumbrance, will constantly attend to prayer, and to the ministry of the word, which is our grand business, and which we should be glad to prosecute without interruption."

I have not occasion to speak much to you Sir, of the nature of prayer; but it may not be amiss to *glance* on the subject, and to take notice of the great advantage, and glorious effects of it.

Do you not find that by prayer, an intercourse is kept up between God and your soul? You find it peculiarly advantageous, to retire frequently from the world, that you might draw near the eternal throne: and what employment can be so noble? what situation so important? the greatest honours which can be conferred by our fellow-creatures are mean and contemptible compared with these. Persevere, and you will obtain blessings of infinite value; those communications from above, which will at once enrich and felicitate your spirit. But when prayer is secret, it is not to be limited; you will take a pleasure in wrestling with God, that you might from time to time be directed to suitable subjects for your public ministrations, and to obtain the divine blessing on them; in laying the cases of your friends before the Lord, and paying particular attention to those, which are attended with circumstances of particular difficulty or trial. Those persons who are

in distress of soul, will be especially remembered by you: If convictions are lately fixed on the minds of any, you will be earnest that the impression, though smarting may prove salutary, may end in the saving conversion of the soul to God. And while you will have reason to be thankful, for the grace which shines in *some* of the Lord's people, you will be called to sympathize with *others*, who are sorely distressed on spiritual accounts, and this sympathy will operate to advantage at the throne of grace. There can be no doubt if you thus wait on your heavenly Father, but your acquaintance with him will greatly increase, which must be the source of solid satisfaction to your mind; you will find his company most pleasant, and that you are sweetly at home with God. And at the same time, if I may use the expression, you will get into his way of thinking, there will be a similarity in the objects of choice and aversion, your soul will experience a gradual and divine transformation, a spiritual glory will appear upon you, which will shine to his honour, from whom it is emitted.

Prayer, you know, is the duty, which has the greatest influence on the christian life.

And is this remark unnecessary at the present time? Is it not requisite, that *Ministers* should be exhorted to attend to their own spiritual concerns, as well as to those of others? Is there not danger while we are preaching to others, we ourselves shall be cast away? That while we are watching the vineyards of others our own may be neglected? I believe it possible, that men may pray apparently like incarnate angels; and preach with the eloquence of Appollos; that they might long draw the attention of multitudes; yea and be very useful; and after all be lost eternally themselves. Judas, for any thing that appears to the contrary, was as acceptable and as useful a preacher, for a time, as any of our Lord's Apostles. Let us take care, lest we get a habit of consulting the sacred pages, merely to be furnished with matter for our public ministrations; while we forget that our own souls should feed on the important and divine truths. By closely walking with God in *this* duty, you will be likely to grow in divine love; you will contemplate with unspeakable satisfaction the excellencies of the divine nature; you will see such a beauty in the moral attributes of Deity, as will draw your heart to him; and while you consider his gracious manifestations to a lost world, and his dispensations to yourself in particular, you will find gratitude working within you, and stirring you up to enquire

what you shall render for his benefits. We are all ready to complain of spiritual pride, as the cause of much injury to our souls; for what christian finds himself delivered from this dangerous sin! but will not impressive views of God, lay you in the dust before him, and cause you to walk humbly in his sight? Will you not rejoice to have *your* honour lost, in the beams of the *divine* glory? your will, swallowed up in the will of God! We then form the truest judgment of ourselves, when we have the clearest discoveries of God: The christian who plys well the throne of grace, will find himself ready for every good word and work; his obedience will be steady, uniform, and cheerful.

There are, methinks, peculiarly weighty reasons why every Minister should give himself to prayer. The Bible is before you, one of the most important gifts of God to men; it contains truths infinitely precious, and which concern the salvation of souls; but when we consider the word is a copy of the *divine* mind, we might easily suppose it has excellencies, which are not at *once* discovered; here is full scope for the exercise of our rational and immortal powers; we are not likely to reach the true meaning of the Scriptures unassisted by the Spirit of God; but are taught to expect this help in answer to prayer. Methinks I see you as an empty vessel, placing yourself at the fountain of Deity. I follow you into your study, and behold you sitting there, at the feet of Jesus. I see you digging deep into the mines of truth; and as you find your mental vigour begin to fail, or meet with difficulties that put you to a stand, your eyes are directed upward, devout aspirations arise, they pierce heaven, and light and strength succeed. You converse much with God in private, and then, what a propriety and pathos are discovered in your *family* devotions: You come into this sacred place, in a heavenly frame and temper; with a heart richly furnished with grace, and disposed to lead the devotions of God's people: what humility appears in your acknowledgments of sin—how do they tremble when they hear its malignity confessed, and its consequences deprecated! Your heart is warmed with hallowed fire, while you entreat the divine favour, and offer praises for the goodness of God: the flame is spread from soul to soul, an unusual influence is felt, so that many are constrained to say, of a truth God is in this place! In this manner, your people will better know how they ought *themselves* to approach the throne of God, and how to pour out their hearts before him.

I think you will find yourself never more fit to converse with your fellow-creatures, than when you converse most with God ; you will then have liberty in speaking, and a blessing will accompany what is spoken ; the law of kindness will be in your lips, and many will have reason to bless God on your account.

You have been long enough in the sacred Ministry, I suppose, to find that this profession is attended with peculiar difficulties and trials. You will find an imitation of the Apostle's conduct of great advantage under them. You may expect to be tempted like other men, yea, it is not altogether improbable, but you might have *peculiar* trials of this sort : Satan, sometimes attacks most vigorously the officers in the Lord's army, knowing if he can prevail against *them*, others will be injured by their wounds. He may throw discouragements in your way ; or exceedingly disturb your mind in the service of God : but by close and humble waiting on your heavenly Father, you will have wisdom to detect his craft, and strength to resist his temptations, and, being resisted, he will flee from you. You will, we have reason to fear, after all your care and diligence, find many who turn a deaf ear to your heavenly message ; you know it was said to a most excellent Minister once, " And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument : for they hear thy words, but they do them not."* You are not to wonder then, as though some strange thing happened unto you : at the same time we admit it is very discouraging ; but you are not left without support ; you will have reason to rejoice in your *own* interest in God, though others oppose him ; and if discouragements of this sort stir you up to cry more earnestly to him, it will be well with *yourself* ; nor will you seek him altogether in vain for poor sinful men.

You are not to wonder, if in the course of your ministry, you meet with unkind treatment from men ; many slights may be cast upon you, and the behaviour of some may be affronting. Under such trials, however, your free access to God

* Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

will afford you peculiar support: you will have direction, to conduct yourself in a proper manner, and then, though their malignant arrows may graze on your armour, they will not be able to wound you.—“ We will give ourselves continually to prayer”—It is added, “ and to the Ministry of the Word;” which latter clause calls for our next attention. Let it be your care

I. To preach the pure Word of God.

The subjects which will come under your consideration in the course of your preaching are numerous, and not all of equal importance; but there are a few which may be called leading themes, which will afford the principal matter of your sermons; and I apprehend there ought to be no discourse delivered without a regard to *one* of them. If you desire me to mention them in few words, I should answer—The depravity of human nature—The glory of Christ—The riches of the covenant—And the influences of the Spirit. I call these the four cardinal subjects of a gospel preacher’s ministrations. You will see great reason to treat of the sad apostacy of man from God: to set forth, and to lament, the malignity of that principle within us, which is opposed to God and holiness: to show sinners the impiety and black ingratitude of their conduct; and to point out the dreadful dangerous consequences of incurring the divine displeasure. You find the Scripture frequently treats of this subject, and marks the path of *our* duty. By pointing out the evil nature of sin, you may hope, some will be brought to see their misery, and to desire salvation.

As a Minister of Jesus Christ, you will see it your duty to set forth *his* excellence. You will set forth his personal honours, as “ the effulgent ray of his Father’s glory, and the express delineation of his person, and upholding the universe by the word of his power.” You will represent him as Immanuel, God with us—as the King in Zion—the instructor of his people—and as the Priest, who by his atonement has made satisfaction for their sins. You will set him forth as the great Head of influence to his church, from whom they have life, and wisdom—as the true light, who illuminates the souls of men—as the foundation on which their hopes must be built—as the pearl of great price—and as the refuge or hiding place of souls which have exposed themselves to the Almighty’s anger by their manifold transgressions.

You will also take a pleasure in discoursing of the riches of God’s gracious Covenant. The privileges belonging to those who are interested in it; of the variety, suitableness, and full-

ness of those precious promises which God has given to his church.

You will represent to your hearers, what things are necessary in order that they may enjoy the benefits of the great redemption; that a change of nature must be obtained; and that this is performed by the Spirit of God. You will represent the nature, design, and importance of *his* operations, and you will depend on his blessing, for success in your labours. Thus you will preach the pure word of God.

II. Let your practical preaching be strictly evangelical. "When we are upon the subject of duty, says a good writer, Christ is by no means to be forgotten; for to persuade men to practical godliness, is one of the most difficult parts of a minister's work. Men will hear with a curious satisfaction a speculative discourse; and with some joy attend to the displays of God's grace; nay, a Felix may tremble when judgment is preached; many indeed will bear to hear of duty too; but to induce them to practise it, *hic labor, hoc opus*; here we had need call in all helps, and take all advantages, which the Gospel as well as the light of nature can furnish. In *other* discourses, we are rather attacking Satan's out-works, a blind and prejudiced understanding; in *practical* subjects we assault Satan's strongest fort, a corrupted will: we may gain the understanding on our side, and gain some share of the affections; but to subdue a perverse will, and make men good practical christians, is not so easy a thing, that we can afford to spare any motive or quickening consideration." You will be therefore careful to shew your hearers, that good works spring from faith in Christ, that they are the natural fruits of this divine principle; while they are renounced in point of justification, yet the believer's heart and life are purified. It appears to us, that there can be no truly good works in the sight of God, unless a man has faith in Christ, for it is necessary that the tree be good, before its fruit can be so. You will shew, that practical godliness is necessary, to discover our gratitude to Christ: you will consider the obligations of men to their great Redeemer, for the great love he has shewn them: because he has shed his precious blood and poured out his soul unto death; you will lead them to observe the ends and designs for which Christ undertook the office of Mediator, that his view was to save his people from their sins, to destroy the works of the Devil: therefore to live in sin, is to offer the greatest affront to Christ, to trample under foot the blood of

the covenant, and to cast the greatest contempt on the most expensive love. Though a man may be brought into a state of acceptance with God, yet he must not think of approaching him without a Mediator: no duty we perform, is fit to appear before God as coming from us; in all our services we are to plead the merits of Christ for acceptance, and of this our people should be frequently reminded by our preaching. When a man takes a view of the compass of christian duties, perceives his own unfitness for them, and finds himself molested by the power of strong temptations, he is ready to cry out who is sufficient for these things? You are to direct such persons from whence they are to expect assistance, assuring them that Jesus is made *strength*, as well as righteousness to his people; that he is ready to assist them in the most difficult duties, and that he will crown the conqueror with glory.

III. Be careful in your preaching to *divide* the word, so as to adopt it to the various cases of your hearers.

A *general* strain of preaching without any direct aim, is not likely to be useful. Those ministers are commonly most successful who have the happiest talent of *dissecting* the heart; in order to attain this, you must study the human character, be acquainted with *men* as well as with books, and endeavour to know all the avenues of the soul; study for this purpose the workings of your own mind; what suits your own experience may be suitable to the experience of *many* others, but not to all; you should therefore make your observations on men of different tempers and characters, for what in your own mind might be aimed at a *few* will be suitable to *many*. For as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.* You will find that *sinners*, though they know their courses are evil, that they stir up against themselves the displeasure of God, and though their own consciences disapprove of their conduct, yet they buoy up themselves with hopes; it will be one end of our ministry to undermine these hopes, to point out the fallacy and danger of them, to shew them how absurd it is for them to expect, they can *long* have peace, while they continue to fight against God. That it is impossible in the nature of things, with such dispositions they can go to heaven, or if they could, that they should relish the pleasures of that holy state. However strange it may appear, there are some, who because they can impose upon their fellow creatures, act as though they could deceive God. Happy would it be if we

* Prov. 27, 19.

had no hypocritical professors in our assemblies. But are there not some to be found, who pay more regard to appearances, than to the substance and essentials of religion? Who under a cloak of sanctity, allow themselves in the practice of sin? Who are very solicitous to secure the approbation of sinful dying men; but are unconcerned about the favour of the eternal God? Is it not too common for men to be proud of their gifts, and to value themselves on account of their *imaginary* graces? Is it not too common for professors to cherish an inordinate love to this present world; and to indulge a censorious carping temper? It will be part of your work, to point out the deceitful hopes of hypocrites; to show them, unless they repent, God will take away their souls, will strip off their masks, and send them to their own place. It will be necessary for you to discover by your preaching, the insufficiency of mere morality. The mind of man is prone to err in various ways: while we admire morality, and insist upon it as of prime importance, yet we must caution men against resting here, and show them the necessity of a change of heart as well as of life.

You will pay particular attention to those, who are under conviction for sin. You will show them the danger of getting rid of their convictions by improper methods. You will point out the ways by which Satan endeavours to distress and injure such persons, and by which he has been too successful in his attempts against many. You will remind them, of the aggravated guilt they will contract, if they stifle their convictions and return, without remorse, to their vicious courses; you will lay before them every consideration, which might have a tendency to encourage them to hope in divine mercy, and to fly to the arms of the compassionate Jesus. You will frequently meet with some, in the Lord's flock, who are weak and feeble, whose cases will call for particular attention, and who must be treated with the greatest care and tenderness. It is often found that *sincere* souls are kept in darkness for a season: there are some who after they have enjoyed much comfort, are suffered to fall into great distress; they perceive within them such sad remains of indwelling sin; Satan is so busy with his temptations, and these are accompanied, it may be, with dark dispensations of providence, they are ready to write bitter things against themselves and to fear they shall be banished for ever from the presence of God: though it is plain to *others*, by their holy lives, by their fear of sin, by their dread of God's displeasure, that they really love him, and that they are sowing in tears to reap a glorious harvest anon: you remember

of whom it is prophecied, He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* It is also a part of his work † to bind up the broken hearted; you will tenderly bear with the complaints of such persons, and endeavour to choose out words that may be acceptable and useful to them, and be assured the compassionate Jesus will remember your labours of love, for such distressed souls. Let those who are in a backsliding state, be faithfully warned of their danger, and be exhorted to repent, and do their first works; and if they discover signs of genuine remorse, let them be reminded of the compassions of Deity, and his readiness to receive those who return unto him. Exhort those who are strong, not to trust in themselves, but to exercise a meek dependence on the Lord Jesus; to sympathize with those who are in distress, remembering that they are also in the body. You will remember those who are borne down with a weight of afflictions; and afford them all the assistance in your power. We find the great ruler of the universe, displays much of his glorious character in the dispensations of his providence: to trace out its various windings; to reconcile its seeming contradictions, and to show how good might be gathered, from events which are most painful, will call for the most diligent attention, and will show, as much as any thing, the Scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.‡ Thus you will adapt yourself to the various cases of your people.

IV. Let there be a mixture of tenderness and fervour in your *manner* of preaching. The more you imbibe of the Spirit of the Gospel, the farther will you be removed from that bitter censorious spirit, which generateth strife, and which is so much to be lamented in many professors. There is a considerable degree of respect due to large assemblies: while you keep at a distance from a servile fear of man, methinks I see you standing in this place, discovering that self-diffidence and amiable modesty, which will have a tendency at once to fix the attention, and to conciliate the affections of your hearers. Recollecting the authority by which you speak, and the importance of your message, you will perceive a solemnity diffused through your spirit, and it will discover itself in every feature of your countenance, and in

* Isa. 40, 11. † 61, 1. ‡ Mat. 13, 52.

every part of your gesture. When speaking to obstinate sinners, you will lament over, rather than threaten them: You will deal faithfully; but you will let them see this faithfulness arises from benevolence; and if the tear of compassion glitters in your eye, and trickles down your cheek, I shall call it manly and becoming; it will be silent eloquence likely to take great effect. You have been often struck with the conduct of your Master when he drew near to Jerusalem; it is said, he beheld the city and wept over it.† You will be careful of whatever subject you treat, to let your people see that you are in earnest: you will at times be borne down, as it were with the weight of your theme: yet remembering that you are speaking for eternity, anon your soul will kindle into a sacred flame, the ardour of your spirit will be manifested by your voice and action; while you will guard against every thing pedantic or that looks like affectation, your *expression* and the feelings of your soul will be in unison. I cannot suppose you will be *anxious* to secure to yourself human applause, but you will rather preach so as to lead your hearers into themselves; you would rather hear it said, "how ill we have lived, than how well he has preached." Our own feeling and appearing to feel, the weight of the truths we deliver, will have the best tendency to banish carelessness and inattention from our congregations, and this is the preaching which God is pleased most to own and bless.

V. Increase your store of human learning, that you might appear with growing advantage in your ministry.

I know it is the fashion with many to decry learning, but you, who know its worth, will disregard their censures. Though this, like other useful things, be liable to abuse, yet if it be sanctified, it will be found of excellent advantage. Were a HERVEY, a WATTS, or a DODDRIDGE, less useful, for their acquaintance with literature and science? rather was not this a mean of extending the sphere of their usefulness? You will think it expedient to increase your acquaintance with languages, and you will reap the advantage of it in your public discourses: I advise you to read some portion of the sacred scriptures daily, in their original tongues. Polite letters deserve a considerable share of your attention: stile, it has been justly said, is the dress of thoughts, a simple neatness, and a manly decorum, should ever be its characteristics, this will assist you much in accomplishing the important designs you

† Luke 19, 41.

have in view : and I the rather mention this, because I think many good and useful men among ourselves, are too negligent in this respect.*

You will do well, to pay a careful attention to the sciences ; these have a wonderful tendency to expand the mind and to fill it with grand ideas. " I have mentioned Mathematics," says the great LOCKE, " as a way to settle in the mind a habit of reasoning closely, and in train ; not that I think it necessary that all men should be deep Mathematicians ; but that having got the way of reasoning, which that study necessarily brings the mind to, they might be able to transfer it to other parts of knowledge as they shall have occasion. For in all sorts of reasoning, every single argument should be managed as a mathematical demonstration, the connection and dependence of ideas should be followed, till the mind is brought to the source on which it bottoms."*

I feel a peculiar satisfaction in addressing these hints to you, because I know the foundation is well laid : with due care on your part there will be a beautiful superstructure.

* The dissenters study divinity at an early age, and if they had united the study of the belles lettres with it in a due proportion, I believe their divines would have made a still more honourable appearance than they have done, though they are, and ever have been, both numerous and respectable. The belles letters enable a man to adorn his knowledge, and recommend his writings to general notice.

Dr. KNOX.

* " Happy the man, who lays the foundation of his future studies deep in the recesses of geometry (' that purifier of the soul,' as Plato called it,) and in mathematical philosophy ; compared with whose noble theories, I make no scruple to declare, our classical lucubrations are mean and groveling, undignified and destitute of beauty.—What subject of human contemplation shall compare in grandeur with that, which demonstrates the trajectories, the periods, the distances, the dimensions, the velocities, and gravitation of the planetary system ; states the tides ; adjusts the nutation of the earth, and contemplates the invisible comet, wandering in his parabolic orb, for successive centuries, in but a corner of boundless space ? which considers, that the earth's diameter, of one hundred and ninety millions of miles in length, [meaning the diameter of its orbit ;] is but an evanescent point at the nearest fixed star to our system ; that the first beam of the sun's light, whose rapidity is inconceivable, may be still traversing the bosom of boundless space ? Language sinks beneath contemplations so exalted, and so well calculated to inspire the most awful sentiments of the Great Artificer !"

WAKEFIELD.

VI. Let your general deportment subserve the great ends of your preaching.

Remember at all times, that you are a Christian, and a christian Minister : it is of great importance, that our conduct in general, be agreeable to our character. It is a sad thing, when people have reason to say of their ministers, they like them *in* the pulpit ; but not out of it. We ought in all respects, to be examples to the flock : not only to perform *public* duties well, but also those of a domestic and private nature. As a minister of Jesus Christ, you will imitate his example in the *private* walks of life, as well as in those which are more conspicuous. You will accustom yourself to think humbly of your own abilities and attainments ; and you will cultivate a benevolent temper towards your fellow-creatures : Your language will be correspondent to the gentleness of your spirit, and your conduct will be remarkable for suavity and uprightness. It is necessary, perhaps more than we are aware, to pay attention to little things ; for things which are small in themselves, may be great in their consequences. You are not to expect that the most friendly dispositions, and the most exemplary conduct, will always meet with a suitable return ; but your religion will teach you to sustain injuries with temper, and to forgive the authors of the wrong. We are far from recommending, that cringing servility, and that duplicity of conduct, which often enter into the politeness of this world ; but we think sterling worth, is capable of a polish, which might make it more useful to society. While you are careful to treat all around you with tenderness, and are not easily susceptible of affronts, you will conciliate their esteem, administer to their comfort, and secure in a great measure, your own peace of mind ; you will find many ready to attend to you when you open your mouth for instruction, and your exhortations will have additional weight. When called to give a word of reproof, as you sometimes will, it will probably come with a propriety and a force, which will answer the purpose without giving great offence. You will be careful, I am persuaded, to maintain a dignity of character in your intercourse with mankind : it will be necessary to avoid that familiarity with any, which might have a tendency to lessen you in their esteem : there is a happy medium to be observed, between a mean flexibility, and that magisterial stiffness which always gives disgust. To appear to advantage in company is

no mean attainment ; and we find in general, if we are happy in ourselves, others are pleased with us. A uniform cheerful piety should be the peculiar aim of every gospel minister : this seems to be our highest attainment on this side the grave. Bear with me while I add another exhortation.

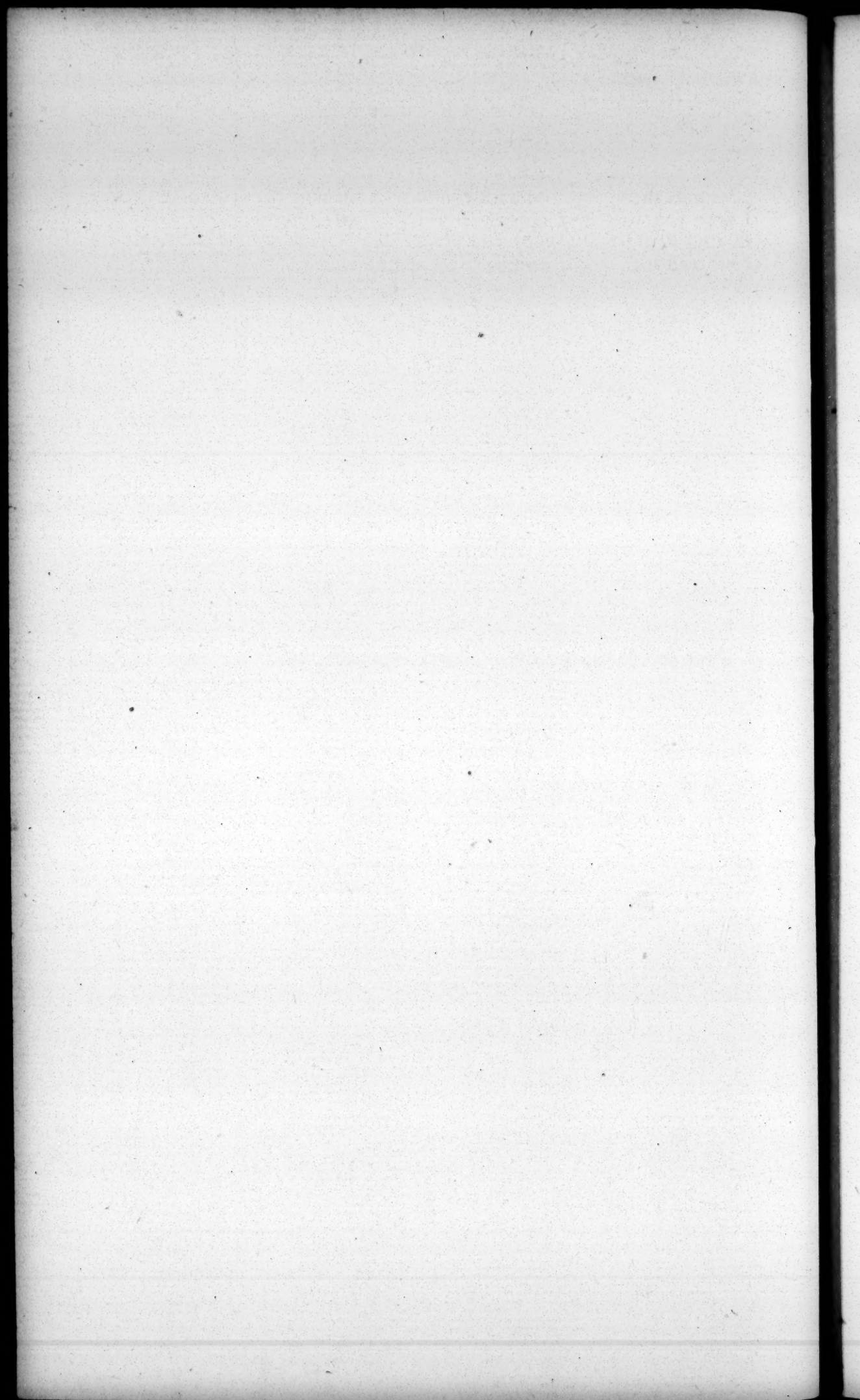
Let your attention to your ministerial functions be steady and unremitting.

It should be your aim to get an habitually serious frame of spirit, that you might be ready to embrace every opportunity of doing good. It is your duty to be instant in season and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.* Endeavour in your free visits to your friends, to introduce something that may be beneficial to their souls. Encourage meetings for prayer, in which the gifts of others may be exercised, and a blessing obtained on your labours. When you visit the sick, an opportunity is afforded you to deal plainly with their souls : then you are called upon to use great freedom : disorders often take a sudden turn, therefore no time is to be lost for administering friendly and salutary advice. The little regard with which *Death* is treated, in general, is an awful subject of complaint ; you have often remarked the trifling conversation that is introduced at funerals ; this I think, shows the sad depravity of our nature ; on such occasions you will do well, to labour after a peculiarly serious frame of spirit : endeavour to introduce something weighty and important ; or if you cannot succeed in this, discountenance, by your silence, that conversation which is unimportant and trifling.

If you really delight, as I have no doubt you do, in your great Master's work, you will not be likely to leave it, though you may meet with difficulties and temptations. It appears strange to me, how any who have been once engaged in this important office, can relinquish it ; unless absolutely compelled to it by God's afflicting hand : Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.† I trust as your judgment grows more and more mature, your zeal will increase, you will find growing pleasure in your work, and that for many many years to come, you will have reason to look back upon the transactions of this day with great thankfulness. Thus, Sir, in a friendly manner, I have laid before you a few plain hints :

* 2 Tim. 2, 4. † Rev. 2, 10.

I commit them, together with yourself, to the blessing of God :
I hope you will long appear in the Church a burning and
shining light ; full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, blessed in
your own soul, and a blessing to all around you.



MINISTERS AND PEOPLE

Unitedly labouring to promote the Success of the
GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

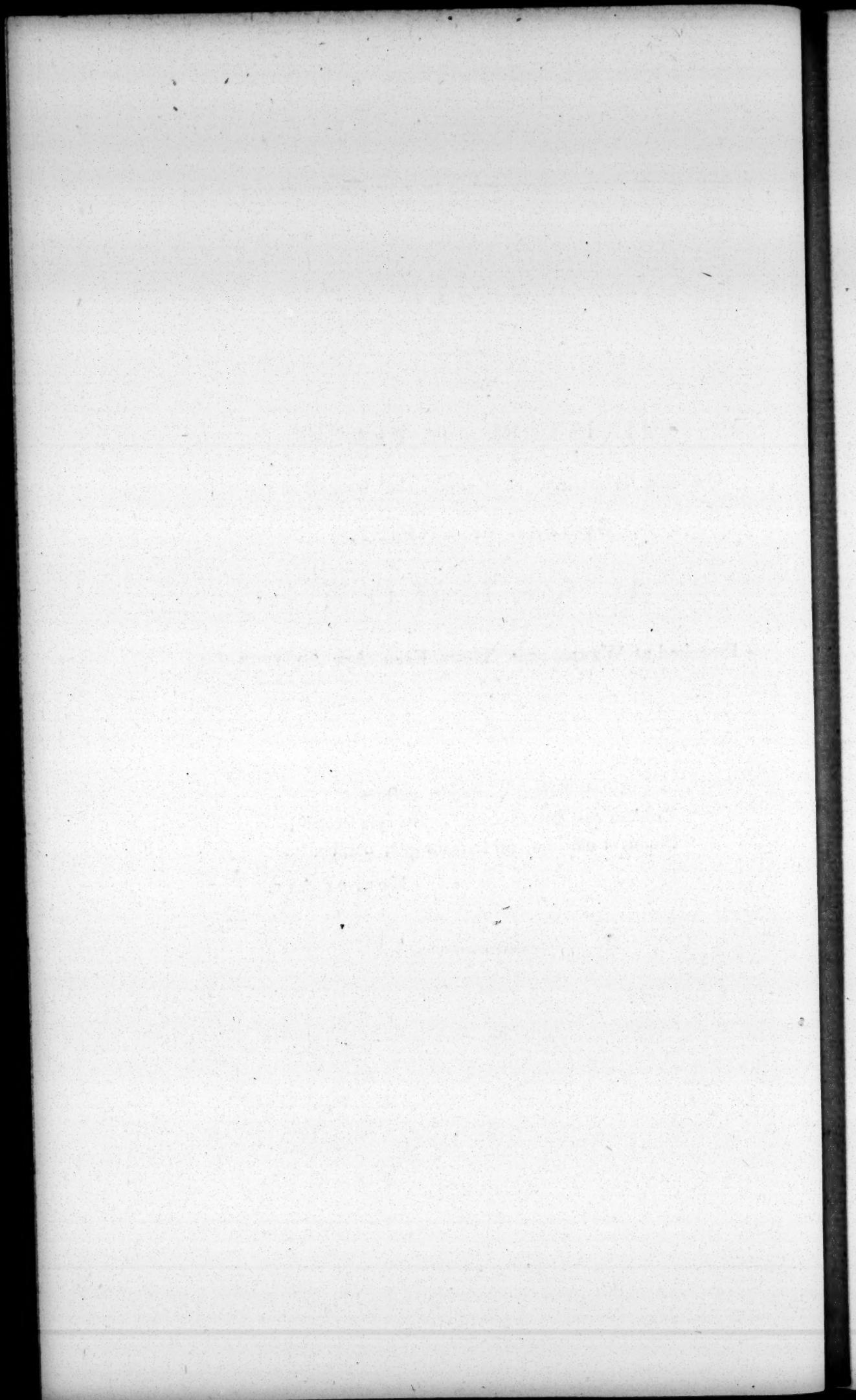
A S E R M O N

Preached at WEYMOUTH, Thurs. Even Apr. 20, 1797.

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- - - - - "Fungar vice cotis, auctum  
"Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi;  
"Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo."

HOR. DE ART.

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## S E R M O N.

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PHIL. IV. 3.

*And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel.*

**I**NDEPENDENCE, equally with self-existence, is the prerogative of God alone. It is not found among the creatures. Whether those celestial intelligencies who stand around our Father's throne of glory, and of whom we know little but the name, be independent of each other; such is the state to which sin has reduced ourselves, that *we* need mutual assistance, and must drag on a miserable existence at best, without a reciprocation of kindness. Yet, so numerous and tender are the links by which Society is connected, that we feel a pleasure in receiving and returning the obligation.

The Apostle is here gratefully acknowledging the assistance which he received from some pious women in promoting the success of the gospel, "*Help those women, &c.*" Not in the public ministry of it; from *that*, apostolic authority had restricted; but, by private visits to their neighbours; improving the hours of social intercourse, to recommend the doctrines and the duties of the Gospel to their heathen acquaintance; and in directing and encouraging those, whose hearts were piously affected under public preaching. God has taken especial notice in his word, of the piety of his female people. Their sphere is more limited, and their opportunities of discovering zeal for his glory, are less numerous, than those of the other sex. It stands recorded to the honour of the Jewish

women in the wilderness, that they consecrated their brazen looking-glasses to make the laver of the sanctuary, Ex. 38, 8. When the cowardly disciples of Christ fled, his pious female friends adhered close to him, sympathized in his affliction with their tears, and performed the last affectionate rites to his corpse. Luke. 23, 27, 55. Priscilla, with her pious husband, taught Apollos the way of God more perfectly, Acts. 18, 26. Would to God, that Ministers had such helpers now! We should rejoice in our respective Congregations, to contemplate pious women labouring with ourselves to promote the success of the Gospel. But, these things by the way.

Whom the Apostle intends by "true yoke-fellow," is not easy to determine. Some suppose, Epaphroditus, the Minister of this Philippian Church, Chap. 2, 25. Others, because the word is of the common gender, and the object of the direction, *Women*, suppose, some pious female; perhaps, the Apostle's wife; but the adjective being masculine, determines against this. "Help those women;" the word "Women" is not in the original, but properly supplied, the pronoun and article being feminine.

The obvious idea is, "That even those who are excluded from the public ministry of the word, may yet labour with Ministers in promoting its success. And, That it is the duty of Ministers to help such." Let this simple observation divide our discourse.

I. "Even those," &c. as above.

1. When they exert themselves in the various methods that subserve the design of the Gospel. As,

1.) By the religious instruction of their own families. Piety, as well as Charity, begins at home, 1 Tim. 5, 4. Children, and other domestics, are equally under the care of Ministers, with their parents. But Ministers are not always in their people's families, nor have they authority over the children, nor opportunities, as those, under whose wing they grow up. Parents can watch the out-breaking of vice, can put them on prayer and reading, and see that they attend to it, when Ministers cannot. They can communicate religious knowledge as their capacities expand, and thus, as it were, prepare the soil for the seed of religious instruction in public; and open the understanding to comprehend the observations, cautions, doctrines, and explanations of the pulpit. How much of the work of Ministers in explanation would be saved, and how familiar



to the rising generation would be religious truths, if heads of families would seriously engage in this important task ! Such an one was Abraham, Gen. 18, 19. Joshua, 24, 15. Such was the family of Boaz, Ruth. 2, 4. The holy child Jesus at twelve years was able to ask and answer pertinent questions in religion ; no doubt, through the pious instructions of Joseph and Mary, Luke. 2, 46, 47.

2.) By embracing proper occasions of suggesting religious hints to their neighbours. In the smallest country village there are many souls, with whom Ministers have no opportunity in all their lives, of conversing. We have no merchandize, nor secular business, to need their custom, or employ their hands. And so, no opportunity of address. But the people have many. All the walks of public life abound with company ; and the change of the weather, local events, the death or sickness of neighbours, removals, accessions, seasons, and the news or politics of the day, afford apt occasions to a serious mind to drop a word concerning God and the soul. This is to labour with Ministers for the salvation of souls. How often has God owned the zeal of his people in this covert way of preaching, by making it the beginning of religious impressions ? Thousands of souls now in glory, owe their first conversion to such occasional words. " Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." " Lips of the righteous feed many." So the promise, Ezek. 34, 26. Example of Christ ; his walk with the two disciples, Luke. 24, 17. Converse with Nicodemus, John. 3, 2. &c. with the Samaritanes, Ch. 4. So he improved the barren fig tree, the tribute-money, the lost sheep, washing of the hands, a friendly repast, and many more common occurrences, to suggest sacred instruction.

3.) By setting a good example. This preaches with the liveliest tone, and with the most commanding authority, the precepts of the Gospel. A good example is a gospel-sermon to those who never attend the dictates of the pulpit. When the truths and doctrines of the Gospel of Christ are exemplified in the character and conduct of Christians ; when their lives are governed by religious integrity, and themselves are patterns of undissembled piety, men may be allured to enquire, What can that system be, which they see thus delineated ? Here, Professors, you ought all to be preachers. Thus you will preach your Ministers' sermons over again, with double advantage. Thus the exhortation to believing wives, 1 Pet. 3, 1, 2.

Such was the example of Daniel, Ch. 6, 5. "Let your light  
"so shine," &c. See 1 Pet. 2, 12, 15. and 3, 16.

2. By uniting with their Ministers in every scheme that may promote the success of the Gospel. We trust, that our eye is single to the glory of God, and our hearts warm for the conversion of our fellow-men. We are willing to lay out ourselves in every thing that may advance these. Our minds, at times, suggest various plans that carry a pleasing aspect to the attainment of this end. But, if the whole labour and expence lie on ourselves, they must fail. Now, Brethren, if *you* labour with us, and God smile on us, our endeavours are like to succeed. Thus, in our Associations as ministers; in uniting with pious friends in London, to essay the conversion of the Heathen; in distributing religious books among unconverted neighbours; in opening places of worship in villages, or populous hamlets; if you enter, with us, into such designs, and help us to bear the difficulty and burden, what may not be done? So the people seconded the zeal of David in oblations for the temple, 1 Chr. 29, 5, &c. The zeal of Hezekiah in restoring sacrifices, celebrating the passover, and destroying idolatry, 2 Chr. 29, 31, 35, 36, and 30, 2, 4, 5, and 31, 1. So they united with Nehemiah in building the wall, Ch. 2, 18. in reforming abuses, Ch. 5, 10, 12, 13. And in covenant-engagement to God, Ch. 10, 1, 28. &c.

3. By inviting unconverted souls to hear the Gospel. Alas! how little zeal have most Professors here! They can see their neighbours sabbath after sabbath turn their back on the only instruction that can save the soul, without even the feeble effort of a word of invitation! We who preach, cannot well give the invitation, without a breach of modesty; lest it be construed, "Come, and hear *us*." But, with what propriety may our people speak to their neighbours of the seriousness of our instruction, and the zeal of our hearts for the conversion of sinners; and thus excite their curiosity to attend on the word. My dear hearers, were you but wise and active to embrace such opportunities, how many souls might you place under the sound of the Gospel, and thus be the instruments of their saving conversion to God! Though a thousand invitations might be given in vain, one soul in this way savingly brought home to Christ, would well repay. May God enable you to take the hint now. Thus did Andrew, John, 1, 41. Philip, ver. 45. and the converted Samaritaneſs, Ch. 4, 29. So the prophecy, Zech. 8, 21. Isa. 2, 3.



4. By praying for them. "Brethren, pray for us," said the great Apostle Paul. Our work is arduous, our difficulties many, our account is solemn. We are exposed to the same temptations, and are compassed with the same infirmities as you. We are ready to rejoice and weep with you; and, with the Apostle, "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." We know, that our own prayers help us on in our work; and we wish for the aid of your's. We never forget you. Your affectionate remembrance of us before the throne, is a debt of duty, of love, of retaliation. Yourselves will speed the better, if God hear.

## II. The duty of Ministers, to "help" such

1. By a judicious exposition of gospel doctrine and duty. The people have not leisure to consult folios, and study laboured systems of divinity. It is the business of Ministers to do these. As the industrious bee imbibes from every flower, and turns its labours into honey; or, as the clouds absorb moisture from every quarter, and distill their contents in refreshing rain: so, when we are enabled to present the fruit of study in plain and evangelical discourses, in just and familiar expositions, the understandings of the people are opened, and from our labours they can communicate religious instruction to others. Let our animating thought be, to make the people wiser and better in every sermon. It is said of Appollos, "He helped them much, which had believed through grace," Acts. 18, 27, 28. See 2 Tim. 2, 2.

2. By holding up their example to more languid professors. Conscious superiority is a noble stimulus. To keep the ground which we have gained, and, "not to lose the things which we have wrought," will often call forth great exertions. Here they are innocent, they are laudable. When any of our people are eminent for their zeal in the cause of Christ, and labour with us, in any of the ways before mentioned, to promote the conversion of their neighbours—to hold up their example, may at once enkindle zeal in the cold breasts of others, and animate themselves still to go on in their pious endeavours. So the Lord proposes the example of his father to Solomon, 2 Chr. 7, 17, 18. So the examples of former saints are proposed to us, Jam. 2, 21, 23. 1 Cor. 10, 32, 33. Zech. 1, 6. Heb. 6, 12.

3. By setting before them the noble animations of the Gospel. We need them ourselves, to support us amidst our difficulties and discouragements, and those languishments of

heart which want of success in our work, frequently creates. Such are, *the worth of the soul*. One soul weighs down the whole material universe. The eternal salvation of one soul is of infinitely greater importance than the temporal salvation of millions of worlds. Yea, the conversion of one soul may, in its consequences, lead to the conversion of a thousand. Would to God, that we could ever preach with this idea before our eyes! Again, *the approbation of Christ*. What a pleasing welcome will he give to his people, whether Ministers or not, who have exerted themselves to promote the conversion of their fellow men! What a large reward of glory awaits those who are wise to win souls, and who, instrumentally, turn many to righteousness. As gospel ministers are represented nearer the throne than even the angels, (Rev. 4, 6, 9, 10. and 5; 6.) so, no doubt, a proportionate reward is laid up by the righteous judge, for all his people who have been active and zealous for him in the world. Think of this, my reverend Brethren; think of it, my own soul, when we speak in the name of God! May it stretch every nerve of holy diligence, and warm our hearts with seraphic zeal in the best of causes!

4. By cheerfully engaging with them in all their labours of love. Far from every Minister of Christ be that selfish spirit, which refuses to co-operate, where we have not the honour of the invention. If the liberal souls of our people devise a way for the more effectual spread of the knowledge of the Redeemer in our spheres, let us, in the name of God, add our best exertions; and count it our highest honour to follow, whoever leads the way, to advance the interest of Jesus. The weight of glory will rest on his shoulder, not, who coolly suggested what spiritual indolence forbade to execute; but, who called all his powers to a vigorous accomplishment. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing, &c. " God is not "unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of love."

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Let ministers and people be, from hence, excited to holy diligence. Consider,

1. The importance of the object. The glory of the Redeemer; of that Redeemer, whose person, work, and glory, should be infinitely dear to us. He has wept and bled for the salvation of souls; and in every instance of their conversion, he sees, with infinite satisfaction, the travail of his own soul. In our aim



let us promote that satisfaction. A principal part of his mediatorial glory is the final happiness of his redeemed ; our endeavour after that happiness in their conversion, is the promotion of his glory.

2. The worth of souls. The human soul is the noblest image of its Maker, that this lower world affords. Its capacities and powers fit it for everlasting duration. When ages, transcending the enumeration of the highest seraph, are all revolved, the human soul will endure, and feel its capacities for happiness or misery ever vigorous and young. The eternal salvation of such a being, words cannot express it, nor thought duly conceive it. But, without its conversion to God, its salvation can never be accomplished.

3. How short our time is. A few years more, and all our opportunities of usefulness to our fellow-creatures will be over for ever. Our busy heads can no more contrive, nor our active hands execute, any plans for their good. Death will seal our lips in silence, unbroken "till the heavens be no more." But the souls for whom we labour, must exist for ever. *Their* present day of grace, and *our* occasions of promoting their everlasting happiness, are fast closing. Every clock that strikes, is abridging our opportunities of service. Then, like our Lord, "I must work the works," &c. John. 9, 4. Eccl. 9, 10.

4. Consider it as a debt of gratitude to Christ for our own conversion. Are we called by grace ; know the worth of our own souls : live under a sacred impression of eternal things ? *They* are equally capable. How can we better requite the Lord for favours so unmerited, next to the obedience and holiness of our own lives, than by essaying the conversion of our fellow men ! Pleasing satisfaction on a dying pillow, to have accomplished it in a degree ! "Therefore, my beloved "brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in "the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your "labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. 15. ult.

END.

heart which want of success in our work, frequently creates. Such are, *the worth of the soul*. One soul weighs down the whole material universe. The eternal salvation of one soul is of infinitely greater importance than the temporal salvation of millions of worlds. Yea, the conversion of one soul may, in its consequences, lead to the conversion of a thousand. Would to God, that we could ever preach with this idea before our eyes! Again, *the approbation of Christ*. What a pleasing welcome will he give to his people, whether Ministers or not, who have exerted themselves to promote the conversion of their fellow men! What a large reward of glory awaits those who are wise to win souls, and who, instrumentally, turn many to righteousness. As gospel ministers are represented nearer the throne than even the angels, (Rev. 4, 6, 9, 10. and 5; 6.) so, no doubt, a proportionate reward is laid up by the righteous judge, for all his people who have been active and zealous for him in the world. Think of this, my reverend Brethren; think of it, my own soul, when we speak in the name of God! May it stretch every nerve of holy diligence, and warm our hearts with seraphic zeal in the best of causes!

4. By cheerfully engaging with them in all their labours of love. Far from every Minister of Christ be that selfish spirit, which refuses to co-operate, where we have not the honour of the invention. If the liberal souls of our people devise a way for the more effectual spread of the knowledge of the Redeemer in our spheres, let us, in the name of God, add our best exertions; and count it our highest honour to follow, whoever leads the way, to advance the interest of Jesus. The weight of glory will rest on his shoulder, not, who coolly suggested what spiritual indolence forbade to execute; but, who called all his powers to a vigorous accomplishment. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing, &c. " God is not " unrighteous to forget your work of faith, and labour of " love."

#### IMPROVEMENT.

Let ministers and people be, from hence, excited to holy diligence. Consider,

1. The importance of the object. The glory of the Redeemer; of that Redeemer, whose person, work, and glory, should be infinitely dear to us. He has wept and bled for the salvation of souls; and in every instance of their conversion, he sees, with infinite satisfaction, the travail of his own soul. In our aim



let us promote that satisfaction. A principal part of his mediatorial glory is the final happiness of his redeemed ; our endeavour after that happiness in their conversion, is the promotion of his glory.

2. The worth of souls. The human soul is the noblest image of its Maker, that this lower world affords. Its capacities and powers fit it for everlasting duration. When ages, transcending the enumeration of the highest seraph, are all revolved, the human soul will endure, and feel its capacities for happiness or misery ever vigorous and young. The eternal salvation of such a being, words cannot express it, nor thought duly conceive it. But, without its conversion to God, its salvation can never be accomplished.

3. How short our time is. A few years more, and all our opportunities of usefulness to our fellow-creatures will be over for ever. Our busy heads can no more contrive, nor our active hands execute, any plans for their good. Death will seal our lips in silence, unbroken "till the heavens be no more." But the souls for whom we labour, must exist for ever. *Their* present day of grace, and *our* occasions of promoting their everlasting happiness, are fast closing. Every clock that strikes, is abridging our opportunities of service. Then, like our Lord, "I must work the works," &c. John. 9, 4. Eccl. 9, 10.

4. Consider it as a debt of gratitude to Christ for our own conversion. Are we called by grace ; know the worth of our own souls : live under a sacred impression of eternal things ? *They* are equally capable. How can we better requite the Lord for favours so unmerited, next to the obedience and holiness of our own lives, than by essaying the conversion of our fellow men ! Pleasing satisfaction on a dying pillow, to have accomplished it in a degree ! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. 15. ult.

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